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International application number: PCT/US05/009767

International filing date: 24 March 2005 (24.03.2005)

Document type: Certified copy of priority document

Document details: Country/Office: US
Number: 60/558,214
Filing date: 31 March 2004 (31.03.2004)

Date of receipt at the International Bureau: 25 April 2005 (25.04.2005)

Remark: Priority document submitted or transmitted to the International Bureau in compliance with Rule 17.1(a) or (b)



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APPLICATION NUMBER: 60/558,214

FILING DATE: *March 31, 2004*

RELATED PCT APPLICATION NUMBER: *PCT/US05/09767*



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PROVISIONAL APPLICATION COVER SHEET

1726 U.S. PTO
033104

This is a request for filing a PROVISIONAL APPLICATION under 35 CFR 1.53 (c).

U.S. PTO
033104
60/558214

Docket Number		62844		Type a plus sign (+) inside this box	
INVENTOR(s)/APPLICANT(s)					
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TITLE OF THE INVENTION (280 characters max)					
PROCESS FOR PREPARING 1,3-DICHLOROACETONE					
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ENCLOSED APPLICATION PARTS (check all that apply)					
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Specification		Number of Pages 14		<input type="checkbox"/> Small Entity Statement	
<input type="checkbox"/> Drawing(s)		Number of Sheets _____		<input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) _____	
METHOD OF PAYMENT (check one)					
<input type="checkbox"/> A check or money order is enclosed to cover the Provisional filing fees			PROVISIONAL FILING FEE AMOUNT		\$160.00
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge filing fees and credit Deposit Account Number: No. 04-1512					
The invention was made by an agency of the United States Government or under a contract with an agency of the United States Government					
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No					
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, the name of the U.S. Government agency and the Government contract number are: _____					

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EXPRESS MAIL MAILING NO.: EV331475906US
DATE OF DEPOSIT: March 31, 2004

PROVISIONAL APPLICATION FILING ONLY

PROCESS FOR PREPARING 1,3-DICHLOROACETONE

Background of the Invention

The present invention relates to a process for
5 preparing 1,3-dichloroacetone and epichlorohydrin.

It is known to prepare 1,3-dichloroacetone by the direct chlorination of acetone with chlorine. See, for example, U.S. Patent 4,251,467. The process involves the use of iodine or iodine salts in greater than catalytic amounts.
10 Iodine is very expensive (\$13/kilo according to the 9/23/02 issue of The Chemical Marketing Reporter). For this reason, it is very important to recover and recycle the iodine or iodine salts in the process. The extra steps of recovering and recycling the iodine or iodine salts add significant
15 complexity for building a commercially viable process for a commodity-type product. Another method for directly chlorinating acetone involves using methanol instead of iodine or an iodine salt. However, the major product of this process is the ketal of the chlorinated species. To get the
20 1,3-dichloroketone, one must hydrolyze the ketal which is not a trivial process.

It would be desirable to provide a process for preparing 1,3-dichloroacetone which would eliminate the need for using iodine and all the associated complexity of
25 recovering and recycling it, as well as eliminate the need for hydrolyzing the ketal in the case of the latter method.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In a first aspect, the present invention is a process for preparing 1,3-dichloroacetone which comprises (1)
30 chlorinating acetone to form monochloroacetone, and (2) disproportionating the monochloroacetone in the presence of a platinum catalyst to produce acetone and 1,3-dichloroacetone.

Additionally, a strong acid and, preferably, a chloride source (e.g., added as a salt or from hydrolysis of monochloroacetone) and some water may be added to help initiate the reaction.

5 In a second aspect, the present invention is a process for preparing epichlorohydrin which comprises

(1) chlorinating acetone to form monochloroacetone;

(2) disproportionating the monochloroacetone in the presence of a platinum catalyst, optionally, a strong acid
10 and, preferably, a chloride source (e.g., added as a salt or from hydrolysis of monochloroacetone) and some water to produce acetone and 1,3-dichloroacetone;

(3) hydrogenating the 1,3-dichloroacetone in the presence of a catalyst to produce 1,3-dichlorohydrin; and

15 (4) cyclizing the 1,3-dichlorohydrin with a base to produce epichlorohydrin.

Other aspects of the present invention will become apparent from the following detailed description and claims.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

20 The process of the present invention comprises the following steps:

(1) Chlorination

Chlorination of acetone to produce monochloroacetone (MCA) is a well known process. See, for
25 example, U.S. Patent 4,439,623 and U.S. Patent 3,397,240.

(2) Disproportionation

The monochloroacetone produced in step (1) is subjected to a disproportionation reaction to produce both acetone and 1,3-dichloroacetone, in the presence of a
30 platinum catalyst, optionally a strong acid and, preferably, a chloride source (e.g., added as a salt or from hydrolysis

of monochloroacetone) and some water. The products may be recovered by known methods, such as extraction or distillation.

Surprisingly, it has been found that heating
5 monochloroacetone with a specific type of catalyst, which is a platinum catalyst, produces acetone and 1,3-dichloroacetone simultaneously, without producing any significant amount of 1,1-dichloroacetone or higher chlorinated by-products.

The platinum catalysts useful in the present
10 invention include any platinum +2 and/or +4 catalysts. Such catalysts are described in U.S. Patent 6,262,280, incorporated herein by reference. Examples of suitable catalysts include PtCl_2 and its hydrate, or an alkali metal salt (or its hydrate) of the PtCl_4^{-2} , PtO_2 , chloroplatinic
15 acid, ammonium chloroplatinate, polyamine platinum salts and the like. It is not necessary for the catalysts to be complexed with ligands such as, for example, siloxane complexes.

Preferably, the catalysts employed in the practice
20 of the present invention, are platinum salts. The platinum catalyst is present in a homogeneous form regardless of whether or not it is added as an insoluble salt. If some of the platinum catalyst is leached into the reaction mixture a reaction takes place. If no platinum is leached into the
25 reaction mixture (based on Pt analyses of the liquid phase of the reaction mixture), no reaction takes place. While not wishing to be bound by theory, it is believed that this reaction is related to what goes on in the Shilov-type reaction, described in Luinstra, G.A.; Wang, L.; Stahl, S.S.;
30 Labinger, J.A.; Bercaw, J.E. *J. Organometallic Chem* 1995, 504, 75-91, "C-H activation by aqueous platinum complexes: A mechanistic study."

(3) Hydrogenation

A key feature of the present invention is to hydrogenate the 1,3-dichloroacetone without removing a chlorine atom through the formation of HCl. Such
5 hydrogenation process is described in US Patents 5,744,655, and 6,350,922, both of which are incorporated herein by reference. The hydrogenation catalysts can be homogeneous or heterogeneous with heterogeneous being most preferred. Use of a heterogeneous catalyst minimizes or eliminates the need
10 to isolate the catalyst for continued use.

The 1,3-dichloroacetone produced in Step (2) is hydrogenated by reaction with a hydrogenating agent to produce 1,3-dichlorohydrin.

The hydrogenating agent useful in the present
15 invention may be, for example, molecular hydrogen, an alcohol, or a combination thereof. The hydrogenating agent is preferably molecular hydrogen.

Examples of suitable alcohols useful in the present invention can be primary or secondary alcohols such as
20 methanol, ethanol and C₃-C₁₀ primary and secondary alcohols. Preferably, the alcohol is methanol. Examples of other secondary alcohols useful in the present invention are described in U.S. Patent No. 2,860,146 which is incorporated herein by reference.

25 The maximum quantity of hydrogenating agent source is not critical and is governed by practical considerations such as pressure, reactor efficiency, and safety. When the hydrogenating agent source is gaseous, then the quantity of hydrogenating agent is preferably at least enough to provide
30 the desired pressure. However, in most cases, the reactor preferably contains no more than about 1,000 moles of molecular hydrogen per mole of α -chloro ketone and more preferably contains no more than about 100 moles of molecular

hydrogen per mole of α -chloroketone. Gaseous hydrogenating agent sources, such as molecular hydrogen, are preferably used according to known methods for mixing a gaseous reagent with a liquid reaction mixture, such as bubbling the gas
5 through the mixture with agitation or solubilizing the hydrogen under pressure.

The hydrogenation reaction of the present invention takes place in the presence of a heterogeneous transition metal-containing catalyst.

10 The transition metal useful as the heterogeneous catalyst of the present invention may be one or more metals selected from any of Groups IB, IIB or IIIA-VIIIA on the periodic table of elements, as currently adopted by the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC),
15 which is incorporated herein by reference. The catalyst metal is preferably selected from Group VIIIA of the IUPAC periodic table, including for example, iron, cobalt, nickel, ruthenium, rhodium, palladium, osmium, iridium, platinum and mixtures thereof. The catalyst metal is most preferably
20 platinum.

The temperature of the reaction is not critical, provided that all of the reagents, aside from the hydrogen, remain liquid and in contact with each other. However, low temperatures require longer reaction times and lead to
25 increased levels of impurities. The reaction temperature is preferably at least about -10°C , more preferably at least about 20°C and most preferably at least about 50°C . The reaction temperature is preferably less than about 250°C , more preferably no more than about 100°C and, most preferably
30 no more than about 85°C .

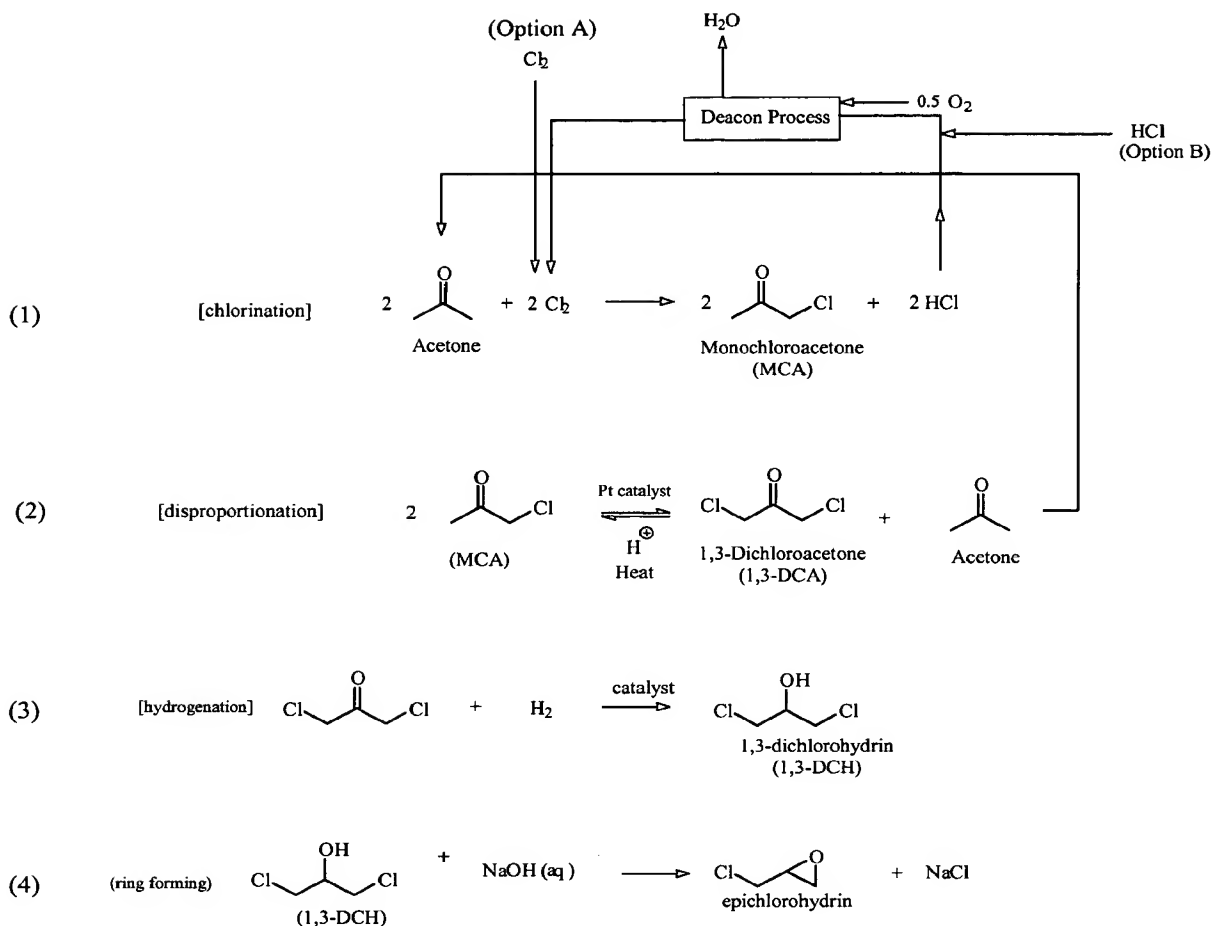
The reaction pressure is not critical as long as there is sufficient hydrogen to run the reaction in the reaction mixture. The pressure is preferably at least about

14 psi (97 kPa, 1 atmosphere) and more preferably at least about 50 psi (340 kPa, 3.4 atmospheres). The pressure is preferably no more than about 3,000 psi (21 MPa, 220 atmospheres). Higher pressures lead to shorter reaction
5 times.

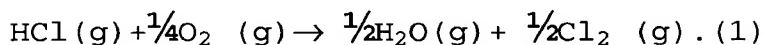
(4) Ring-Forming or Cyclizing Step

The 1,3-dichlorohydrin produced in step (3) is cyclized to produce epichlorohydrin by contacting it with a strong base, such as an aqueous alkali metal hydroxide,
10 including, for example, sodium hydroxide. This step is well known in the art of manufacturing epihalohydrin. See, for example, U.S. Patent 2,860,146, incorporated herein by reference.

The process of the present invention can be
15 represented by the following general equation:



The Deacon Process comprises producing chlorine by direct oxidation of gaseous HCl with O₂ in the presence of a CuCl₂ catalyst. This process is described by the overall chemical equation:



Reaction (1) in the presence of a CuCl₂ catalyst is a fast overall exothermic process, which is expected to reach equilibrium under normal industrial operating conditions of 700°K to 750°K.

The following working examples are given to illustrate the invention and should not be construed as limiting its scope. Unless otherwise indicated, all parts and percentages are by weight.

EXAMPLES 1 to 4GC Conditions

GC: HP 5890 II with FID and 6890 auto-injectors (Front detector)

5 Column: Rtx-35, Restek Corp., Cat # 10453, ser# 441628

Column type: 35% diphenyl - 65% dimethyl polysiloxane

Column dimensions: 30m x 0.25 mm x 1.0 um

Head pressure: 25 psi

Split vent flow: 50 mL/min

10 Purge gas flow: 4 mL/min

Air flow: ~300 mL/min

Hydrogen flow: 30 mL/min

Make-up flow: 30 mL/min (column flow ~4 mL/min)

15 Temperature ramp: 55°C for 4 min hold, +15°C/min to 250°C
for 10 min.

Run time: 27 minutes

Injector volume: 0.5 uL (5 uL syringe)

Injector temp: 200°C

Detector temp: 290°C

20 Solvent washes: A= acetonitrile, B= 50/50
acetonitrile/water

Integrator: HP ChemStation

The disproportionation reactor is a 4-dram vial equipped with a magnetic stir bar. Monochloroacetone is
25 added to the reactor which contains water, a catalyst as shown in Table I and a strong acid and preferably a chloride salt. The relative amounts of the materials are shown in Tables I-IV. The mixture is stirred and then heated at about 95 to 100°C for about 17 hours. The product is cooled to
30 room temperature. Ten drops of the filtrate is diluted to 1 mL with acetonitrile, then filtered through a disposable syringe filter and analyzed by gas chromatography. The amounts of products produced are reported by GC area percentages as shown in Tables I to IV (EXAMPLES 1 to 4,
35 respectively).

TABLE I: Results for MCA with Different Non-supported Catalysts
(NOTE: All samples contain MCA and catalyst. Water added to all reaction mixtures.)

Catalyst	Moles cat./Moles MCA	Moles Cl/Moles MCA	Moles H ₂ O/ Moles MCA	Area% MCA Remaining	Area% 1,3-DCA	Area% 1,1,3-TCA	Area% 1,1-DCA	Area % Acetone
HHCP (aq)*	0.0021	0.013	0.57	81	6.4	0.01	2.36	8
PtCl ₂	0.0025	0.0051	0.17	61	11.3	0.06	2.22	10.1
PtO ₂	0.0025	0	0.15	65	11.3	0.05	2.24	9.3
PtCl ₂ / H ₂ Pt(OH) ₆ **	0.0026	0.0046	0.06	59	10.0	0.05	2.34	7.96
Pt powder	0.0030	0.0093	0.15	94	0.27	0.00	2.03	1.71
CoCl ₂	0.0027	0.0054	0.15	94	0.27	0.01	2.06	1.77
CuCl ₂	0.0026	0.0051	0.16	92	0.28	0.00	2.05	1.77
CuCl ₂ (repeat)	0.0026	0.0053	0.14	95	0.28	0.00	2.05	1.06
CuCl	0.0027	0.0055	0.16	94	0.28	0.00	1.97	1.69
FeCl ₃	0.0024	0.0047	0.16	94	0.27	0.01	2.03	1.99
HgCl ₂	0.0024	0.0047	0.15	94	0.27	0.01	2.03	1.94
IrCl ₃	0.0024	0.0047	0.14	95	0.26	0.00	2.01	0.50
IrCl ₄	0.0025	0.0050	0.14	94	0.26	0.01	2.05	1.76
PdCl ₂	0.0024	0.0047	0.17	94	0.27	0.01	2.03	1.93
RuCl ₂	0.0023	0.0047	0.14	95	0.26	0.00	1.85	1.73
RhCl ₂	0.0022	0.0045	0.17	94	0.27	0.02	2.03	1.67
TiCl ₃	0.0029	0.0057	0.15	94	0.27	0.01	2.03	1.83
TiCl	0.0026	0.0052	0.16	95	0.26	0.00	2.02	0.72
ZrCl ₄	0.0030	0.0061	0.13	71	0.35	0	3.09	2.62
MCA only	NA	NA	NA	95	0.17	0.00	2.28	0

*HHCP = hydrogen hexachloroplatinate (IV), 8 wt% solution in water. Formula weight H₂PtCl₆ = 409.82.

**The PtCl₂ contributed ~46% of the moles of Pt.

- A source of a strong acid is preferred at the beginning of the reaction. It helps to accelerate the reaction.

5

The data in Table I show that only the Pt(+2) and Pt(+4) catalysts produced significant amounts of 1,3-dichloroacetone without producing any significant amounts of 1,1-dichloroacetone or higher chlorinated by-products.

10

TABLE II: Results for MCA with PtO₂ (with and without HCl) vs Time

(NOTE: All samples contain MCA (2g). 5 wt% HCl was used with PtO₂ and 11 wt% HCl was used with Pt/carbon)

5

	Time (hours)	Moles Pt / Moles MCA	Moles Cl / Moles MCA	Moles H ₂ O / Moles MCA	Area% MCA Remaining	Area% 1,3-DCA	Area% 1,1,3-TCA	Area% 1,1-DCA
PtO ₂ (no HCl)	6.5	0.0027	0	0.15	92	1.0	0.01	2.05
PtO ₂ (with HCl)	6.5	0.0027	0.0076	0.29	79	7.8	0.02	2.07
PtO ₂ (no HCl)	~22.5	-	0	-	60	11.2	0.05	2.31
PtO ₂ (with HCl)	~22.5	-	0.0076	-	65	11.3	0.05	2.24
MCA only	NA	NA	NA	NA	95	0.17	0	2.28

The data in Table II indicate that adding HCl to the reaction mixture in the presence of a platinum catalyst early in the reaction (6.5 hours after start of reaction) helps get the reaction started sooner.

10

TABLE III: Results for MCA with Different Acids

(NOTE: All samples contain MCA (2g), 5 wt% Pt on carbon (0.2 g), acid and water)

15

Acid	Moles Pt / Moles MCA	Moles Cl / Moles MCA	Moles H ₂ O / Moles MCA	Area% MCA Remaining	Area% 1,3-DCA	Area% 1,1,3-TCA	Area% 1,1-DCA
HCl	0.0023	0.029	0.468	73	10	0.04	2.32
H ₂ SO ₄	0.0026	0	0.549	90	2	0.02	1.99
p-TSA hydrate*	0.0025	0	0.457	80	3	0.01	2.37
MCA only	NA	NA	NA	95	0.17	0	2.28

*p-TSA = para-toluenesulfonic acid dihydrate

The data in Table III indicate that HCl performs better than the other strong acids for running the disproportionation reaction.

20

TABLE IV: Results for MCA with 5 wt% Pt on carbon catalyst and LiCl

(NOTE: All samples contain MCA (2g) and 5 wt% Pt on carbon (0.2g))

	Moles p-TSA* / Moles MCA	Moles Cl / Moles MCA	Moles H ₂ O / Moles MCA	Area% MCA Remaining	Area% 1,3- DCA	Area% 1,1,3- TCA	Area% 1,1- DCA
MCA only	NA	NA	NA	95	0.17	0.00	2.28
LiCl (dry)	0	0.228	0	85	5	0.03	2.15
LiCl + Water	0	0.156	0.450	84	6	0.02	2.11
LiCl + p-TSA	0.051	0.255	0.102	63	15	0.11	2.28
p-TSA only	0.052	0	0.104	63	0.22	0.02	3.18

*p-TSA = para-toluenesulfonic acid dihydrate

5

The data in Table IV indicate that a chloride salt helps generate the disproportionation reaction.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS

1. A process for producing 1,3-dichloroacetone which comprises (1) chlorinating acetone to form monochloroacetone, and

5 (2) disproportionating the monochloroacetone in the presence of a platinum catalyst, a chloride source, water and, optionally, a strong acid to produce acetone and 1,3-dichloroacetone.

10 2. The process of Claim 1 wherein the platinum catalyst is selected from the group consisting of PtCl_4^{-2} , PtO_2 , chloroplatinic acid, ammonium chloroplatinate, and polyamine platinum salts.

3. The process of Claim 1 wherein the strong acid is hydrochloric acid.

15 4. A process for producing epichlorohydrin which comprises (1) chlorinating acetone to form monochloroacetone; (2) disproportionating the monochloroacetone in the presence of a platinum catalyst, a chloride source, water and, optionally, a strong acid to produce acetone and 1,3-
20 dichloroacetone; (3) hydrogenating the 1,3-dichloroacetone in the presence of a catalyst to produce 1,3-dichlorohydrin; and (4) cyclizing the 1,3-dichlorohydrin with a base to produce epichlorohydrin.

25 6. The process of Claim 5 wherein the hydrogenating agent is molecular hydrogen, an alcohol, or a combination thereof.

7. The process of Claim 5 wherein the catalyst is a heterogeneous transition metal-containing catalyst.

30 8. The process of Claim 5 wherein the hydrogenating agent is molecular hydrogen.

9. The process of Claim 5 wherein the 1,3-dichloroacetone produced in step (2) is hydrogenated without removing a chlorine atom through the formation of HCl.

10. The process of Claim 5 wherein the 1,3-dichlorohydrin produced in step (3) is cyclized to produce epichlorohydrin by contacting it with a strong base.

11. The process of Claim 5 wherein the strong base is an aqueous alkali metal hydroxide.

ABSTRACT

Epichlorohydrin is produced from acetone by (1) chlorinating acetone to form monochloroacetone; (2) disproportionating the monochloroacetone in the presence of a platinum catalyst, a strong acid and preferably a chloride source (e.g., added as a salt or from hydrolysis of monochloroacetone) and some water to produce acetone and 1,3-dichloroacetone; (3) hydrogenating the 1,3-dichloroacetone in the presence of a catalyst to produce 1,3-dichlorohydrin; and (4) cyclizing the 1,3-dichlorohydrin with a base to produce epichlorohydrin.